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A1 some of the gaiters in the said gaiter range being stretchable to fit two or more joints of the said joint range so the said joint range can be accommodated by the range of gaiters wherein a gaiter is selected from the gaiter range to fit a particular joint.

26. A method of installing a gaiter around a joint defined between joint members the method comprising the steps of providing a range of gaiters, of the kind having a tubular body part and opposite end portions each tapered in a direction away from the body portion, for use with a range of joints of different dimensions, the range of joints being greater than the range of gaiters and at least some of the gaiters in the said gaiter range being stretchable to fit two or more joints of the said joint range so the said joint range can be accommodated by the range of gaiters wherein a gaiter is selected from the gaiter range to fit a particular joint.

27. The method according to Claim 1 wherein each joint is defined between first and second members and each gaiter of the said range of gaiters comprises a flexible tubular body having first and second end portions and a central portion therebetween the said end portions being configured for secure attachment to respective first and second joint members.

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28. The method according to Claim 2 wherein each joint is defined between first and second members and each gaiter of the said range of gaiters comprises a flexible tubular body having first and second end portions and a central portion therebetween the said end portions being configured for secure attachment to respective first and second joint members.

29. The method according to Claim 1 in which each gaiter incorporates a central portion having folds therein to permit axial extension of the gaiter body.

30. The method according to Claim 1 in which the gaiter range includes at least one gaiter having a plurality of seating channels at one or each end portion.

31. The method according to Claim 1 in which at least one gaiter of the gaiter range is dimensioned to fit exactly, without any substantial stretching of the gaiter, one or more of the range of joints whilst also being stretchable to fit other joints in the joint range.

32. The method according to Claim 1 in which the wall of said at least one gaiter is configured and dimensioned to provide the requisite stretch characteristics for a given range of joint member dimensions.

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33. The method according to Claim 1 in which the wall of said at least one gaiter has, throughout, a maximum thickness of approximately 3mm.

34. The method according to Claim 1 in which the said at least one gaiter has stretch characteristics to accommodate the process of fitting the gaiter.

35. The method according to Claim 1 in which the wall thickness of one or more gaiters in the gaiter range is approximately 2mm.

36. The method according to Claim 1 in which the said at least one gaiter may be formed from a synthetic rubber compound formulated to provide a minimum stretch of 550% at break.

37. The method according to Claim 1 in which the said at least one gaiter has stretch characteristics to accommodate prolonged installation in position about a joint.

38. The method according to Claim 1 in which one or both end portions of the said at least one gaiter are permanently stretchable to a diameter which is 115% of the respective (unstretched) end portion diameter, wherein the stretching of

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the gaiter results in no more than a 10% change in the properties of the gaiter rubber.

39. The method according to Claim 1 in which at least some of the gaiters in the said gaiter range are formed from a synthetic rubber compound which is formulated so that the gaiter is also compressible to fit two or more joints of the joint range.

40. The method according to Claim 1 in which one or both end portions of the said at least one gaiter of the gaiter range are radially compressible.

41. The method according to Claim 1 in which the said one or both end portions are radially compressible to a compressed diameter which is 98% of the uncompressed respective end portion diameter.

42. The method according to Claim 1 in which the said one or both end portions are radially compressible, such that the compressed end portion and, in particular, the pertaining fitting section retains a substantially circular cross-section.

43. The method according to Claim 1 in which the or each gaiter of the range is stretchable in all directions, and is at

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least stretchable longitudinally and transversely relative to the longitudinal axis of the gaiter.

44. The method according to Claim 1 in which the said end portions of one or more gaiters of the gaiter range incorporate one or more internal and/or external ribs or beads which extend wholly or partially around the circumference of a respective end portion of the said one or more gaiters.

45. The method according to Claim 1 in which the wall thickness of the gaiters in the gaiter range is constant.

46. The method according to Claim 1 in which one or more gaiters of the range incorporate a gaiter wall which varies in thickness to alter the flexing characteristics of the respective gaiter(s).

47. A gaiter suitable for use in the method of Claim 1 wherein the gaiter is stretchable to fit two or more joints of a joint range.